

A walk in the snow by darthstormer

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Summary: Mike and Eleven share a Christmas Eve walk in the snow.
One-shot, pure marshmallowy Mileven fluff.

A walk in the snow

Snow. It had taken Eleven a long time to come around to the idea that the cold white flakes could be pleasant. Her opinion was understandable, of course, having spent the early part of an Indiana winter hiding alone in the woods. It had been a bitter fight to keep the cold at bay that year. But that had been years ago now, and she had come to know the magic the silent white powder could contain.

Mike and Eleven were home for Christmas after their first semester away at college. The families had all gathered at the Wheeler's for Christmas Eve dinner. As the evening wore on, the house had begun to feel hot and crowded. Scattered conversations mingled here and there. Ted Wheeler was already fast asleep in his favorite chair in the living room.

Mike leaned in and whispered, "Want to go for a walk?"

"Yes," she smiled back, eager for a few minutes alone.

They walked toward the back door, unnoticed by any of the other guests, and gathered their coats and boots and slipped out into the chilled night air.

"I forgot just how loud they can all get when everyone is together like that," Mike remarked as they started down the driveway and into the street.

"They're just excited to catch up," she returned, looping her arm through his and leaning in close as they walked.

"Oh well, at least it means no one tried to come along with us. I can't remember the last time we had a moment alone."

"And just what do you need to get me all alone for, hmm?" she teased.

At that, he swung her around and pulled her into an embrace. She looked up into his deep brown eyes and he leaned in to kiss her. Their lips met and a warmth spread through both of them, down to

their very core.

"That," he replied, when they finally pulled back.

"I guess that's a good reason to be alone" she grinned.

They continued up the road toward the park at the end of the block. Of course, Mike had another reason he had wanted to get her alone for a little while tonight. He had a Christmas surprise for her, one he had been planning for longer than he cared to admit. Last night, he and Will had snuck up to the park to hang lights and make sure everything would be perfect for tonight.

As they walked along, the snow started falling again in fat, sticky flakes. There would most certainly be a few fresh inches for Christmas morning. Without being too obvious Mike started guiding them across the park and toward the gazebo at the center. They reached it as the snow intensified.

Stopping to stand in the center of the protective shelter, Mike reached up a tender hand brush a few flakes from where they rested on her cheek. Eleven could sense that something was up as Mike was acting quieter and more distracted than usual, but he seemed very happy as well.

Across the lawn, Will hid in the shadow of the maintenance shed watching the happy couple escaping the snow. It had been a close call leaving the house, having missed the signal when Mike and Eleven broke away from the party for their walk. He had been forced to cut through two backyards and up a slushy hill to avoid being seen as he made his way to his appointed post. He had been relieved when he got there to find they had not yet arrived. Now all he had to do was wait for Mike's signal.

He double checked the handle on the breaker box and was pleased to find that maintenance had not replaced the padlock he and Mike had removed the previous night with a pair of bolt-cutters. The old lock remained right where they had left it, on top of the box with an apology note and \$5 taped to it.

Mike knew the time was right. His arms holding hers and looking

deeply into her beautiful brown eyes, he began.

"El. Before I met you, I never really understood what love was. From the first time I looked into your beautiful eyes, I knew my heart was yours."

She smiled, taken aback at this sudden shift but at the same time warmed to her core by the sweet things he was saying.

He continued, "When I thought I lost you, I felt that my entire world had fallen apart, and nothing would ever be right again. That year without you was the darkest point in my life, but even when I thought the darkness would overtake me completely, it was the thought of you, and the hope that I could one day find you again, that kept me going. I vowed to myself that if I ever found you again, I would do everything in my power to keep you safe; to never lose you again."

A single tear formed in the corner of his eye at that, and breaking free, started to roll down his cheek. Ellen looked back at her sweet boy, tears beginning to form in her own eyes and smiled in shock at the words pouring forth from his beautiful mouth.

At that, he snaked his hand into the pocket of his coat and fished out a small padded box. The move escaped her notice as she continued to stare into his eyes, as he went on.

"When I'm with you, I feel like my heart could burst. You make me happier than I ever thought it was possible to be and if you'll have me, I want to spend the rest of my life trying to make you just as happy."

He stepped back, holding out the small box. In one smooth move, Mike dropped to one knee and lifted the lid. As his knee hit the ground, Will threw up the handle on the breaker box and thousands of tiny white Christmas lights, wrapped around every post and rafter, blazed to life all around them. The tiny points of light glittered like fire off the small diamond ring he held forth to his love.

"Jane Ellen Hopper. Will you marry me?"

She was beside herself with joy. She had hoped, no, knew this day would come. But she was still shocked beyond speech that the day was here, that this was actually happening.

"Yes," she smiled, the tears in her eyes beginning to fall. "Yes."

Mike pulled the ring from its box and slipped it delicately on her left hand, before rising once more to wrap her in his arms. Their kiss seemed to last forever as the whole world faded around them, and for the briefest moment, the tiny lights them seemed to glow with an increased strength, as though hit by a wave of pure energy.

His job done, Will turned and walked back toward the Wheeler's, giving the happy couple a few minutes on their own. Now would come the hardest part of his night; not spilling the beans before they came back.

Finally breaking their kiss, Eleven looked down at her finger, taking in the sparkling beauty of the stone. Suddenly, her smile began to falter ever so slightly and she looked back at Mike.

"What about Dad?" she asked. "He's not going to be too happy about this."

Mike just grinned as he stared back at her growing concern. "He already knows."

"What? When, How?" she asked, puzzled at how Hopper could already know about this. "How are you still alive?" she teased, relief flooding back into her smile.

"I know it's an old and cheesy tradition, but I asked his permission. Remember last month when I spent that afternoon helping Will on a special project? I know friends aren't supposed to lie, but I actually drove back here for the afternoon. I took your Dad out to lunch and asked. I'll admit he wasn't thrilled at first, you are his little girl after all, but he came around and gave his blessing."

"Have I told you how much I love you?" she giggles.

"Once or twice, but you can tell me again if you like," he teases back.

"I love you, Mike Wheeler."

"I love you too, Jane Hopper."

"Are you ready to go tell everyone?"

"Not just yet. I want you all to myself for a little longer," she said, pulling him into another kiss. The lights glowed with an increased light once more, highlighting the flakes falling silently all around them.

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Happy Holidays to all the Mileven fans out there. This was just a quick and dirty bit of one-shot fluff that came to me while taking a Christmas morning walk in the snow. Here's to a happy and prosperous 2018 to all.

For those of you with a Mike or Eleven of your own, keep them close. Love them. Cherish them. Don't be stupid.

For those of you without, fear not. They are out there someone, anxiously waiting for the day you two find each other. Perhaps this could be your year; Stranger Things have happened.